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STATE FOR ISN/MTC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/05/2016  
TAGS: [PARM](#) [ETTC](#) [SZ](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: MTAG: LATEST ON SWISS INVESTIGATION OF BB  
ENGINEERING

REF: SECSTATE 153651

Classified By: Poloff Eric Lundberg, Reasons 1.4 b/d/h

1.(S) Poloff shared with the Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) the reftel non-paper regarding Swiss proliferator BB Engineering and its relations to Iranian firm Ariasa. Following up, SECO's Juergen Boehler told Poloff on October 4 that the investigation of BBE remained with the internal Swiss intelligence agency, DAP. He understood it was progressing, but refrained from offering Poloff further details. (Comment: Boehler earlier this year had been rebuked by the DAP for discussing BBE with Embassy ICE deputy attache. End comment.)

Swiss Press breaks story on BBE  
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2.(C) On October 5, the Swiss weekly "Facts" published a two-page article describing BBE and its owner Miroslav Hirtl, (without naming either) as "Tehran's Swiss helper." The "Facts" article, written by Martin Stoll, was quite well researched, suggesting information came from DAP or another informed source. The article quoted DAP deputy director Juerg Buehler as saying the case had been presented to the Federal Prosecutor for further investigation -- a claim post is trying to confirm. The article cited a document containing a list of 12 high-tech navigational instruments which BBE sought from U.S. firm Sperry Marine; when the export license was denied, BBE falsified an export license application with a fake Vietnamese end-user. "Facts" also reported that Swiss customs seized Iranian-bound DC motors that were shipped by BBE. "MH" (aka Hirtl) was quoted as confirming his trade relationship with Iran, but denying any involvement with the Iranian weapons industry.

3.(S) The "Facts" article made no mention of the United States Government, but wrote that a "foreign intelligence agency" had given the Swiss information on BBE. The article highlighted the extent of Iranian technology shopping throughout Europe, with U.S. expert David Albright identifying Germany and Switzerland as prime targets. The article also spotlighted the role of the United Arab Emirates as a weigh station for this technology. Overall, the "Facts" article concluded that Iranian demand for technology is great, but export controls in Europe are lax.

4.(U) The "Facts" article is not available on the magazine's website, [www.facts.ch](http://www.facts.ch). Post is prepared to fax a German language version to the Department.  
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